IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A coated stainless steel strip product with an evenly distributed layer on one side or both sides of said strip, wherein ~~*characterized in that*~~ said layer has a decorative appearance, the thickness of said layer is maximally 10 μm, the tolerance of said layer is maximally +/- 30% of the layer thickness, the parameter value of L*, a*, b* is respectively $0< L^* <95$, $-66< a^* <64$, $-90< b^* <70$, the tolerance of said decorative appearance as expressed in terms of ΔE is maximally 15 and that the layer has such a good adhesion so that the coated steel strip when tested in soft-annealed condition can be bent more than 90 ° over a radius maximally equal to 5*t, where t is the thickness of said strip, without showing any tendency to flaking or the like.

2. (Currently Amended) Product according to claim 1, wherein ~~*characterized in that*~~ the thickness of the strip substrate is between ~~0,015 mm and 3,0 mm~~ 0.015 mm and 3.0 mm.

3. (Currently Amended) Product according to claim 1, wherein ~~or 2 *characterized in that*~~ the ratio between the thickness of the coating and the thickness of the strip is max 7%.

4. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of claims 1-3, *characterized in that*~~ claim 1, wherein it is made of a substrate of ferritic stainless steel, austenitic stainless steel, stainless spring steel, duplex stainless steel, hardenable chromium steel or precipitation hardenable stainless steel.

5. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1-4 *characterized in that*~~ claim 1, wherein the substrate material in soft-annealed condition has a tensile strength of maximum 1400 MPa.

6. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of the claims 1-4 *characterized in that*~~ claim 1, wherein the substrate material in cold-rolled condition has a tensile strength of minimum 500 MPa.

7. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of the claims 1-4 *characterized in that*~~ claim 1, wherein the substrate material in hardened and/or tempered condition has a tensile strength of minimum 1000 MPa.

8. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of claims 1-7, *characterized in that*~~ claim 1, wherein the coating is a binary metal oxide or a ternary metal oxide or mixtures or solid solutions of said binary metal oxides, the main ingredient in such a mixture or solid solution being Al_2O_3, TiO_2 or Cr_2O_3.

9. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of claims 1-7, *characterized in that*~~ claim 1, wherein the coating is a coating of metal carbides or metal nitrides~~, preferably TiN, TiAlN, ZrN, TiC,or TiC, or CrN,~~ or mixtures thereof.

10. (Currently Amended) Product according to claim 9 subsequently heat-treated in a tempering or a hardening process using a suitable gas atmosphere, ~~*characterized in that*~~ wherein the difference of the decorative appearance of the coating after the heat-treatment ~~coMPared~~ compared to before the heat-treatment as expressed in terms of ΔE is maximally 15.

11. (Currently Amended) Product according to claim 10, wherein ~~*characterized in that*~~ the material after the subsequent heat-treatment has a tensile strength of more than 1000 MPa.

12. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of preceding claims,~~ ~~*characterized in that*~~ claim 1, wherein the layer has a multi-layer constitution of up to 10 layers.

13. (Currently Amended) Product according to claim 12, wherein ~~*characterized in that*~~ each individual layer has a thickness of between [[0,01]] 0.01 to 10 µm.

14. (Currently Amended) Product according to claim 13, ~~*characterized in that*~~ wherein the layer has a multi-layer constitution of individual layers of different coatings of nitrides or carbides ~~such as TiN and TiC, and if desired also in combination with layers of oxides in the form of Cr_2O_3 or Al_2O_3 or TiO_2,~~ or mixtures thereof.

15. (Currently Amended) Product according to claim 14, ~~*characterized in that*~~ wherein there is also at least one covering layer of nickel or chromium or aluminum or titanium in thickness up to 2 µm.

16. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of claims 1-7~~ claim 1 with a desired decorative appearance achieved by using a two-step method comprising ~~with~~ a coating applied in a [[the]] first step and a sub-sequent processing done in a [[the]]second step to achieve a desired ~~colour~~ color, ~~*characterized in that*~~ wherein the coating in the first step is a suitable covering layer of a metal ~~such as aluminum, chromium, titanium, zirconium~~ or a binary oxide of said metal ~~such as Al_2O_3, TiO_2, Cr_2O_3,~~ or mixtures of said metal and said binary oxide.

17. (Currently Amended) Product according to claim 16, wherein ~~*characterized in that*~~ the material after the subsequent processing in the second-step has a tensile strength of more than 1000 MPa.

18. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of claim 16-17 *characterized in that*~~ claim 16, wherein the desired ~~colour~~ color is achieved by incorporating a suitable element ~~such as oxygen, carbon, nitrogen~~ into the coating applied in the first step, by using a reactive gas during a suitable heat-treatment.

19. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of claims 16-18 *characterized in that*~~ claim 16, wherein the final product after the second step has a coating with a desired ~~colour consiting~~ color consisting of metal oxide, metal nitride, metal carbide, or a mixture ~~such as metal oxy-nitride, metal oxy-carbide or metal carbo-nitride~~.

20. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of claims 16-19 *characterized in that*~~ claim 16, wherein the layer has a multi-layer constitution of up to 10 layers.

21. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of claims 16-20 *characterized in that*~~ claim 16, wherein each individual layer has a ~~thicknes~~ thickness of between [[0,01]] 0.01 to 10 µm.

22. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1-21 *characterized in*~~ claim 1, wherein a decorative appearance is of ~~a typical~~ a blue ~~colour~~ color of normally $20< L^* <95$, $-66< a^* <64$ and $-83< b^* <0$.

23. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1-21 *characterized in*~~ claim 1, wherein a decorative appearance is of ~~a typical~~ a green ~~colour~~ color of normally $20< L^* <95$, $-66< a^* <0$ and $-83< b^* <70$.

24. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1-21 *characterized in*~~ claim 1, wherein a decorative appearance is of ~~a typical~~ a red ~~colour~~ color of normally $20< L^* <95$, $0< a^* <64$ and $-40< b^* <35$.

25. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1-21 *characterized in*~~ claim 1, wherein a decorative appearance is of a ~~typical~~ golden ~~colour~~ color of normally $20< L^* <95$, $-66< a^* <64$ and $0< b^* <70$.

26. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1-21 characterized in~~ claim 1, wherein a decorative appearance is of a ~~typical~~ black ~~colour~~ color of 0< L* <50, -20< a* <20 and -20< b* <20.

27. (Currently Amended) Product according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1-21 characterized in~~ claim 1 wherein a decorative appearance of a typical violet ~~colour~~ color of normally 20< L* <95, 20< a* <60 and -25< b* <-60.

28. (Currently Amended) A product according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1-27, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the product is incorporated into ~~it is suitable for cost efficient and productive manufacturing of consumer related applications, such as~~ outdoor life applications, sports and sea-life applications, household applications, camera applications, mobile phones and other telecom applications, edge applications ~~such as knife, saw and shaving applications or the like~~, and applications for personal belongings and care ~~such as watches, glasses, cosmetic applications, buttons and zippers in clothing, perfume bottles or the like~~.

29. (Currently Amended) Method of manufacturing a coated stainless steel strip product according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1-28, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein said product is produced in a continuous roll-to-roll process with a minimum strip speed of 3 m/min, included in a strip production line using sputtering and/or electron beam evaporation comprising an etch chamber in-line.

30. (New) Product according to claim 14, wherein nitrides are TiN and carbides are ~~TiC.~~

31. (New) Product according to claim 14, wherein the multi-layer constitution includes layers of oxides in the form of Cr_2O_3 or Al_2O_3 or TiO_2,

32. (New) Product according to claim 16, wherein the metal includes aluminum, chromium, titanium, zirconium and wherein the binary oxide of said metal includes Al_2O_3, TiO_2, Cr_2O_3,

33. (New) Product according to claim 18, wherein the suitable element is oxygen, carbon, nitrogen.

34. (New) Product according to claim 19, wherein the mixture includes metal oxy-nitride, metal oxy-carbide or metal carbo-nitride.

35. (New) Product according to claim 28, wherein edge applications include a knife, a saw and a shaving application.

36. (New) Product according to claim 28, wherein applications for personal belongings and care include watches, glasses, cosmetic applications, buttons and zippers in clothing, and perfume bottles.

37. (New) A coated stainless steel strip product, comprising:

a strip substrate; and

an evenly distributed layer on one side or both sides of a strip substrate, wherein said layer includes a decorative appearance,

wherein a thickness of said layer is maximally 10 μm,

wherein a tolerance of said layer is maximally +/- 30% of the layer thickness,

wherein said product has a color represented by parameter values L*, a*, b*, of $0 < L^* < 95$, $-66 < a^* < 64$, $-90 < b^* < 70$, where L* is the brightness from black to white, a* is the brightness form green to red, and b* is the brightness from blue to yellow, and

wherein the coated strip product, in a soft-annealed condition, is bent more than 90 ° over a radius maximally equal to 5*t without flaking, where t is a thickness of the strip substrate.

38. (New) The product of claim 37, wherein a difference in the color before a heat treatment and after the heat treatment is represented by ΔE, and wherein ΔE is maximally 15 for a strip substrate width of 400 mm.